What do nations owe their universities?

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WHAT DO NATIONS OWE THEIR UNIVERSITIES?
THE DEMAND FOR A NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY AS AN IDENTITY-BASED MOVEMENT (1661-1815)

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[First: My contribution is actually slightly different than what is indicated on the program. Open First slide]

The Norwegian historiography has had a tendency to depict the demand for a university as the first act of the drama for national independence.[1] The perspective is generally defendable as patriotism was evidently a driving ideological motive behind this claim: the lack of an own university was indeed seen as the permanent symbol for the political submission of Norway towards the Danish Crown, and was reciprocally interpreted by the Danish kings Christian VII (1766-1808) and Frederick VI (1808-1839) as a potential threat against their rule in Norway.[2]

On the other hand, the foundation of the University of Christiania in 1811-1813 could appear as a radical event in a context when most of Scandinavian universities generally remained 'traditional' universities, still keeping many of their medieval features.[3] The wish for another kind of university did not in itself have anything to do with national aspirations, and was indeed shared by many Danes as well, but a university in Norway might give a possibility for implementing such reforms. Thus, it would be simplistic to limit the Norwegian academic project to a purely political matter which found its natural culmination in the Constitution of May 1814: even if it was an identity-based movement, the claim for a Norwegian university was not uniquely conducted by solely nationalist concerns, or, to be more precise, it did not always have mechanical political implications.

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[1] This perspective is particularly visible in commemorative publications. See G. Gran, *Det Kongelige Fredriks universitet 1811-1911. Festskrift*, vol. 1, Christiania 1911, p. LX. See also S. Langholm, "The new nationalism and the new universities – The case of Norway in the early 19th century", in *University and nation: the university and the making of the nation in Northern Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries*, Helsinki 1996, pp. 140-141.
[2] L. Grane, K. Hørby (red.), *Københavns universitet: almindelig historie 1788-1936*, vol.2, Copenhagen 1993, p. 16.
[3] This event happened in a time when many European universities were struggling to implement various kinds of reforms, or were even purely dismissed in the aftermath of the Napoleonic conquests. In T. A. Howard, *Protestant theology and the making of the modern German University*, Oxford 2006, pp. 134-135.

Indeed, the debate around the foundation of a Norwegian university was also part of a larger, international debate about the social role of 'science' (*videnskab* or *Wissenschaft*) and the necessity of an academic reform. The retrospective importance of this event has also been enhanced by the fact that the Norwegian university was founded one year after the Humboldt University in Berlin, in a space which was culturally and geographically close to the German lands.[4] Both institutions were originally founded mainly as secular institutions, at least not under the direct patronage of the Church. The historical coincidence behind the foundation of both universities has therefore been a cause of intense academic debate in Norway, intending to explain in which extent the foundation of the Norwegian university could be explained as events set under similar intellectual premises.[5]

Although the topic is rather divisive[6], I would like to propose a sketch about how the demand for a University, as an identity-based debate, was also modelled by the influence of a specific idea of science's role for the nation, and how Science was constructed as a tool for national enlightenment.

[powerpoint. Slide2]: Presentation du plan

<u>The demand for a Norwegian university under Absolutist rule (1661-1771): an identity-based movement?</u>

Granted by the Danish king in 1811 in the aftermath of Napoleonic wars, it was actually a rather old request. Since 1479, the University of Copenhagen was practically the only academic institution for the whole Danish kingdom, including Iceland and Norway, Faeroe

[4] J. S. Fure, *Universitet i kamp 1940-1945*, op. cit. p. 17. About German cultural influences in Scandinavia, see B. Henningsen, J. Klein, H. Müssener, S. Söderlind (eds.), *Tyskland og Skandinavia 1800-1914: impulser og brytninger*, Oslo 1998. About the supposed influence of the Humboldtian model in Norway's academic life, see S. Langholm, "Humboldt-modellen i Norge", in *Nytt Norsk tidsskrift*, 2002, nr. 3, pp. 241-257.
[5] A. F. Andresen, "Den norske universitetsmodellen i oppstartingsfasen 1811-1830", in *Universitet, samfunn og politick: 18 innlegg om universitets- og vitenskapshistorie*, Oslo 1997, p. 112.
[6] Indeed, there is little agreement on what is actually nationalism. The topic is particularly troublesome in Norway because of the historical importance of a period which was decisive in the political restoration of a State that got its own liberal constitution after four centuries of Danish domination and more than one century of Absolutist rule. Concerning the more specific topic of the relationship between national awakening and the Norwegian academic project, we shall just remark the priest Nicolai Wergeland (1780-1848) is both considered as one of the founding father of the Norwegian idea for a university, as well as the one who inaugurated a nationalist historiographical tradition denouncing Danish historical crimes against the kingdom of Norway. See N. Wergeland, *En sandfærdig Beretning om Danmarks politiske Forbrydelser imod Kongeriget Norge fra Aar 955 indtil 1814, eller fra Haakon Adelsteens Krig med Harald Blaatand, indtil Fredsslutningen i Kiel*, Kristiansand 1816.

Islands and the southern duchies.[7] Since the Reformation, State centralization largely contributed to enhance the social usefulness of academic institutions in providing trained bureaucrats for the Absolutist States all over Northern Europe.[8] Although they still might represent themselves as clerical communities, Northern Europe's universities were practically under the patronage of the Absolutist sovereign that was both head of the State and the Church.[9] In 1629, the introduction of a compulsory theology examination at the University of Copenhagen for all students intending to become priests in the whole kingdom was a clear example of increased administrative centralization at the benefit of the University of Copenhagen. The connection between the needs of the bureaucratic State and the academic monopoly of Copenhagen was all the more reinforced after the introduction of absolutism in 1661 by Frederik III (1648-1670), and materialized by the introduction of a public law examination for State officials in 1736.

Another way of measuring the centralization efforts of the Danish State could be to look at the yearly registration numbers during the first part of the 18th century.

[Power point: new slide 3] Consequences of Danish centralization for student recruitments

The average tendency was indeed an increase of student recruitments until the 1760s: this augmentation made Copenhagen almost comparable to student populations in some major universities of Northern Europe like Oxford and Gottingen.[10]

Regions in the	Total Population	New Student	‰

[7] From 1665 on, the University of Kiel was located in the duchy of Holstein and was another significant academic institution of the Danish kingdom from 1767. However, this duchy was a distinct jurisdiction within the Danish kingdom, as a part of the Holy Roman Empire. In other words, this university was of negligible importance for Norwegian students, who mainly studied in Copenhagen. On the other hand, it was a major academic centre for German-speaking students from the duchies. Ibid. p. 16. At last, the little Academy of Sorø was another important academic institution which was not a University, but bacame an important institutionnal centre for critical thinking in the 18th century.

[8] R. D. Anderson, *European Universities from the Enlightenment to 1914*, Oxford 2004, p. 8.

[9] For example, see the Danish *Fundats* of 1539, which set the University of Copenhagen under the indirect control of the King which economically support the institution, although formally accepting its autonomy inherited from medieval academic practices. In W. Norvin, *Københavns universitet i Reformationens og orthodoxiens tidsalder*, Copenhagen 1937, pp. 52-53.

[10] In 1767, there were 184 new students registered in Copenhagen; 442 in Leipzig, 334 in Halle, 275 in Jena, 259 in Gottingen and 200 in Oxford. In S. Hellehøj, L. Grane, K. Hørby (red.), *Københavns universitet 1479-1979: almindelig historie 1479-1788*, Copenhagen 1991, p. 425.

Danish monarchy		population	
Islands	427.454	55	0,129
Jutland	358.454	43	0,120
Norway	723.141	49	0,068
Schleswig	243.605	11	0,045
Iceland	46.201	3	0,007

Table 1: Proportion of new student recruitments compared to the total population, 1769.[11]

In this global pattern, the position of the Norwegian students and officials in Copenhagen was not really favourable: in the whole 18th century, the Norwegian contingent only represented 15.2% of all students in Copenhagen, and the relation between the total population of Norway and the proportion of students showed a clear disadvantage for Norway and Iceland as compared to other Danish regions.

There were two main reasons which could then explain this inequality between Norwegian-born students and Danish students. From 1739, the reform of the school system led to the suppression of many so-called 'Latin schools' in Norway, leaving only 4 of them in the four main cities (Bergen, Christiania, Trondheim, Kristiansand), and thereby limiting opportunities for learning Latin which was an inescapable path for accessing the University. At the same time, Denmark had 20 Latin schools.[12] The second reason of this inequality was geographical remoteness, as well as the expensiveness and the difficulties of travelling to the Danish capital city.[13]

[Power point Slide 4] Signs of Norwegian dissatisfaction against Danish centralization

In this context, it is little surprising that the general process of Danish centralization awaked dissatisfaction in Norway, and it did sometimes met open resistance.[14] For example, in August 1661, while the Estates assembly of Norway gathered to perform the traditional Acclamation

[11] Ibid. p. 427.
[12] Ibid. p. 425.
[13] P. Arnesen, *Bidrag til at bedømme Christiania som tilkommende Sæde for Norges Universitet*, Copenhagen, 1812, pp. 9-10.
[14] The open resistance against Absolutism was clearly expressed by the peasants who were reluctant to accept the financial and administrative terms of the Absolutist regime. This resistance could vary from collective written grievances to more violent, insurrectional actions.

Ceremony of the young Crown prince Christian who had come to Christiania, on behalf of his father Frederik III, the urban and bourgeois estate expressed its grievances (*bønnskrifter/ suppliker*) and already begged the sovereign for the foundation of a Norwegian academy.[15] This confirms the oldness of the Norwegian demand for a university. The relationship between the Norwegian demand for an academy and the early Norwegian nationalism was obvious in the sense that the demand was clearly formulated along with other demands of national character: among others, the foundation of own Norwegian institutions (Norwegian college for trade, a court of Appeal...), the abolition of various Danish monopolies and customs and a better representation of Norwegian-born officers in the local administrative positions.[16]

[Power point slide 5]: presentation du plan

Enlightened Absolutism (1771-1788) and the Norwegian university as a scientific and economic project

Under the regency of Johann F. Struensee (1770-1772), the upheaval of censorship reactivated the demand for a Norwegian university through several publications, and the influence of Enlightenment ideas encouraged a reflexion on the reform of Copenhagen University.[17] These discussions constituted the first liberal public debate of national significance in modern Norwegian history, and intended to convince the absolutist authorities about the legitimacy and the material possibility of a university. In the 1770s and 1780s, the perspective of founding a university in Norway was mainly approached as one of the modalities for re-organizing the whole educational system in the Danish kingdom. In 1771, Indeed, Struensee entrusted the Norwegian bishop and botanist Johan Ernst Gunnerus (1718-1773) to work on a proposal for reforming the Danish university.

[Power point 6]: Johann Ernst Gunnerus

Gunnerus had taught theology and philosophy at the University of Copenhagen between 1755 and 1758, but he was one of the founders of the first Norwegian scientific society in the city

[15] In G. Gran, *Det Kongelige Fredriks Universitet 1811-1911. Festskrift* op. cit. p. X.
[16] K. Helle (red.), *Aschehougs Norges historie. Krig og fred 1660-1780*, Oslo 1996, pp. 25-26.
[17] The doctor Struensee had himself studied in the University of Halle and was strongly influenced by rationalism and Enlightenment ideals.

of Trondheim in 1760 and he is still regarded as the founder of the Norwegian natural sciences school: instead of working for one plan as commissioned, he worked on two plans in order to promote the Norwegian claim for a university.

The radicalism of Gunnerus' project laid in the will of making the University of Copenhagen a true Enlightenment academy and one of the most modern Universities in Europe, where the pre-eminence would be taken away from orthodox theology and given practical sciences.[18] But his project was all the more interesting that it did openly relayed the demand for a Norwegian university on nationalist premises, enhancing the legitimate needs of the Norwegian nation and consequently became the first Norwegian idea of a University.[19] According to him, Norway was a backward country because it lacked knowledge: without renouncing to the traditional function of a university as a school for priests and State officials, the main duty of a Norwegian university as a source of knowledge would be to promote the material life and the national welfare.[20] The reformulation of the University demand under cover of Enlightenment ideals was the main difference with the previous period: the Norwegian academic project was not only motivated by internal and local factors; it was also legitimated by the desire for intellectual change and modernity which was a transnational phenomenon.

[Power point slide 7]: The consequences of the refusal of Gunnerus' plan

However, this enlightened academic project' died with Struensee's disgrace, and was implemented as such neither in Norway nor in Copenhagen.[21]

On the other hand, the process for educational reforms in Denmark resumed its course until a new foundational decree (*fundats*) was adopted in 1788 for the University of Copenhagen, ensuring the *de facto* academic monopoly of the institution in the twin kingdoms.

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[18] M. Pihl, *Københavns Universitet 1479-1979: Det matematisk-naturvidenskabelige Fakultet del 1*, vol. 12, Copenhagen 1983, p. 30. The university of Copenhagen was indeed regarded by contemporary scientists as a conservative bastion, reluctant to intellectual change. In H. Kragh (red.), *Dansk Naturvidenskabs historie. Natur, Nytte og Ånd 1730-1850*, vol. 2, Aarhus 2005, p. 12.

[19] Reference to Gunnerus plan.

[20] J. P. Collett, *Historien om universitet i Oslo*, Oslo 1999, pp. 14-16.

[21] *Det Kongelige Fredriks Universitet 1811-1911: festskrift*, op. cit. p. XV.

Retroactively, one can see that the refusal of the Norwegian plan and the pursuit of the reform process in Denmark was obviously a political part for two reasons. Firstly, the Danish authorities missed the occasion to answer the Norwegian demand as a part of a global reform of the educational system in the whole kingdom, as proposed by Gunnerus. Secondly, it opened the way to a radicalization of the Norwegian demand, in the sense that this demand would not be relayed by enlightened State officials commissioned by the Danish government: it would be more strongly conveyed by the local elite in Christiania through the growing public sphere, which means through a political frame more uncertain for the Absolutist rule.[22] Thus, between 1771 and 1788, 30 contributions of various forms were published about the possibility of a Norwegian university, both in Copenhagen and in Norway. Between 1788 and 1809, 88 contributions were published, many of them in the Christiania newspaper *Norske Intelligens-Sedler*.[23] In other words, far from closing the debate about the academic reform in Norway, the implementation of a new foundational law in Copenhagen coincided with the reactivation of a political issue which had partly been frozen since the disgrace of Struensee.[24]

[Power point Slide 8]: presentation du plan

The Norwegian 'University turmoil' and the growing public sphere: towards new forms of political participation (1788-1811)

The main question here would be to determine the reasons for the radicalization of the Norwegian demand when it specifically concerned the University.

[Power point slide 9] I could at least identify 3 factors explaining this radicalization

- The greater social, economical and political significance of the Norwegian patricians, and the growth of prosperous urban groups. The 1790s were a true Golden Age for the groups who conveyed the demand for a Norwegian university on similar terms as the bishop Gunnerus did several years before. Economic prosperity was built upon navigation and the export of wood to England which was at war with France during

[22] Following the historian Jens Arup Seip (1905-1992), Norwegian scholars often characterized the practice of power in the period 1760-1790 as an 'opinion-ruled Absolutism.' See J. A. Seip, *Teorien om det opinionstyrte eneveldet*, Oslo 1958.
[23] *Mnemosyne: et Forsøg paa at besvare den af det Kongl. Selskab for Norges vel fremsatte Opgave om et Universitet i Norge. Et priisskrift af Nicolai Wergeland, candidat i Theologi og Adjunct ved Christiansands lærde Skole. Del 1 og 2*, Christiania 1811, pp. 3-34.
[24] Among the 30 publications, most of them were actually published either in 1771 (upheval of censorship) or in 1788 (visit of the Crown Prince Frederick in Norway.)

many years in the second half of the 18th century.[25] This social group was mainly gathered in the South-East, and its economical fortune would become significant enough to support the Norwegian demand not only intellectually or politically, but also politically and financially.[26] Regrouped in local enlightened societies together with Danish *gens de lettres* and Crown officials living in Christiania or Copenhagen, they also favoured a debate around this academic project.

[Power point slide 10] the most archetypal example of this bourgeois elite: Bernt Anker

[Power point slide 11]

- The French Revolution was another factor that contributed to the politicization and radicalization of the Norwegian academic claim.[27] Between 1789 and 1792 at least, the echoes of the French Revolution were not only positively perceived in the intellectual and political debate both in Denmark and in Norway: they largely contributed to set the terms of the political debate in a country where the standard for freedom of speech and expression was quite high.[28] This may also explain the higher degree of debate in this year.
- Quite paradoxically, the demand for a Norwegian university was also reinforced in the 1790s because during his visit in Norway in 1788, the Crown Prince and *de facto* regent Frederick granted many of the Norwegian economical demands, especially the abolition of the Danish corn trade monopoly, without accepting the demands about Norwegian institutions.[29]

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[25] S. Dyrvik, O. Feldbæk (reds.), *Aschehougs Norges historie. Mellom brødre 1780-1830*, Oslo 1996, pp. 58-59.
[26] Although not isolated, the most outstanding example of patricians' wealth and national commitment was undoubtedly given by Bernt Anker (1746-1805), the richest man in Norway, who was also the founder of a trust fund that was supposed to provide financial support to purposes of general and national interest.
[27] While Enlightenment in Denmark-Norway was first related to the growth of the Absolutist State, the first reforms at the University of Copenhagen (1732-1736) and the renewal of the Academy of Sorø as a modern intellectual centre, it became more critical in the second half of the 18th century, with Republican undertones. In H. A. Evju, *I revolusjonens skygge. En studie i den dansk-norske opplysningens politisering 1789-1799*, Oslo 2008, pp. 16-19.
[28] D. Fumex, "Opinion publique et gouvernement royal au Danemark face à la Révolution française (1789-1799)", in *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, n° 333, 2003, pp. 103-119.
[29] "*His Royal Majesty engaged into conversation about this affair with a princely mercy, and gave His consent to our wishes; but look! Just shortly before His arrival, the University of Copenhagen got its new foundational law, leaving even smaller chances for the foundation of a Norwegian university*." In T. Rothe, *Om nogle Dannemarks og Norges Fordringer til hinanden. I Anledning af Kronpridnsens reise til Norge*, Copenhagen 1788, p. 12. See also the account about the journey of the Crown Prince in Norway by Tyge Rothe.

[Power point slide 12] The radicalization occurred in a context of global criticism against Danish Absolutism in Norway, but the university demand became the most emblematic theme in this criticism.

It is also true that after 1788, the demand for a Norwegian university became a major theme in the general request advocating reforms for a more balanced relationship between Norway and Denmark. Thus, in 1793-1795 and in 1810-1811, two large debates were organized by some influential members of the Norwegian elite under the patronage of enlightened societies (Society of Christiania[30]; Society for Norway's Welfare) that launched contests encouraging the participants to reflect upon the moral, intellectual, material and political challenges involved by the foundation of an academic institution in a politically dependant country: this long-lasting debate was a perfect example of what has been called the 'opinion-ruled Absolutism.'

[Power point slide 13] 'Opinion-ruled Absolutism

Nonetheless, this initiative was still led by an elite who was generally faithful to the Danish king. In 1788, taking the occasion of the visit of the Crown prince and *de facto* regent Frederick, the Danish philosopher Tyge Jesper Rothe (1731-1795) enthusiastically defended the political unity of the twin kingdoms, glorifying the brotherhood between two nations under the fatherly benevolence of a king that was not more Danish than he was Norwegian.[31] Few years later, the same philosopher participated to the public discussion about the Norwegian university, a project which he defended because it was seen as a healthy way for the Danish State to re-balance itself and benefit from another scientific centre than Copenhagen: a Norwegian university was not considered unilaterally as a Norwegian demand, it was presented as a reasonable demand with reciprocal advantages for the Danish State, for the Norwegian people, for scientific emulation as well as for strengthening the links between

[30] The Society of Christiania was a committee formed in the early 1790s by the most influential public men of the Norwegian city under the patronage of a priest and Danish Crown official called Jacob Nikolaj Wilse (1735-1801.) Among the members of this circle, one should mention Bernt Anker (1746-1805), who was strongly committed in promoting independent Norwegian institutions. In *Det Kongelige Fredriks Universitet 1811-1911: festskrift*, vol. 1, op. cit. p. XVII-XX.

[31] T. Rothe, *Om nogle Dannemarks og Norges Fordringer til hinanden. I Anledning af Kronpridnsens reise til Norge*, op.cit. pp. 11-17.

the two lands.[32] If the text has the same nationalist tone as many others published for this occasion, and although the 'University turmoil' could clearly be qualified as a national movement[33], this enlightened nationalism was indeed not a seditious movement. Quite on the contrary, it was deeply loyalist to the Danish king, and the university issue was only one aspect of a larger debate intending to reform the Absolutist State: to some aspects, it even included elements likely to support the rationalisation and State centralisation, and was comparable to some contemporary attempts from 'enlightened despots' to reform their universities.[34] For instance, Christen Pram (1756-1815), Danish Crown official as well as *homme de lettres*, won the contest organized by the Society of Christiania (*Selskabet i Christiania*) in 1795: he openly considered that the potential university of Christiania should not be constituted as a distinct jurisdiction for the academic community, as it often was the case for institutions of medieval origins; on the contrary, he pleaded for a direct control of the State upon the new institution.[35] This point of view was indeed often acknowledged among

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[32] T. Rothe, *Til de priselige Mænd, hvilke have udsatt Premie med hensyn paa et Universitets Oprettelse i Norge*, Copenhagen 1793, pp. 8-9.

[33] This best manifestation of this national movement was undoubtedly the success of the national subscription which in 1811 invited "*all good Norwegians*" to donate what they could in order to convince the Danish king of the viability of a Norwegian university. In S. Langholm, "The new nationalism and the new universities – The case of Norway in the early 19th century", in *University and nation* op. cit. p. 141. There were 3600 contributors for a huge amount of 1 million riksdalers. In E. Bjerke, *Uavhengighet gjennom vitenskap. Naturhistorien som økonomisk og politisk redskap i opplysningstidens Danmark og Norge*, Oslo 2008, p. 91. The incomes from export were estimated at 10 millions riksdalers in 1805, and the incomes of what we would call the public sector in Norway was around 2.6 millions riksdalers in 1806. In . Dyrvik, O. Feldbæk (reds.), *Aschehougs Norges historie. Mellom brødre 1780-1830* op. cit. p. 57.

[34] The movement for enlightened reforms of the universities found indeed a fruitful ground in Germanic lands in the early 18th century, spread throughout Europe in the second half of the century and met various fates: most of these reforms intended to adapt academic teachings with the needs of the State, notably by introducing new disciplines (*Cameralwissenschaft*, natural sciences, history) or by limiting the traditional self-government of universities. On the other hand, this reform movement met little resonance in France and in England. In C. Charle, J. Verger, *Histoire des universités*, Paris 1994, pp. 58-59. During the visit of the Crown prince in Norway in 1788, the university issue was only briefly evoked among the grievances of the Norwegian elite, along with other typical Enlightenment issues like the reform of justice, the abolition of torture, the publicity of State general finances, the Danish corn trade monopoly, the condemnation of tyranny or the development of national industry. In these grievances, the enlightened king Frederick II of Prussia was also depicted as an appropriate model for the Danish king. In C. Ingman-Manderfelt, *Folkets Røst til hans Kongelige Høihed Kronprindsen ved Hans Ankomst til Norge 1788*, Copenhagen 1788.

[35] "*A university is almost everywhere considered as an own State; in the same way as its rector still keeps nowadays the academic silver sceptre. This traditional rule is a remain of hierarchy's days and a memory that the clergy, which considered universities as clerical foundations, tried as much as possible to exclude the landlord and to keep for itself or for the Pope the dominion over the academic government; but this rule is now useless, or may lead to abuses, as it cannot be helpful for us to refuse the general government of the fatherland, and the immediate surveillance and protection of the legitimate authorities, by giving ourselves the slightest constitution that would sooner or later be fatal to the small peculiar State under the authority of changing rulers and their uneven competences, their caprices , their inactivity, their negligence, or their eagerness for power. We should therefore not wish for universities anything as such a distinct jurisdiction that many of them have maintained even now...*" In *Forsög om en höjskoles Anlæg i Norge efter den af et Selskab i Christiania fremsatte Priisopgave. Et Priisskrift af Christen Pram, Secreteer og Archivar ved general Land Oeconomie og Commerce Collegium i Kjöbenhavn*, Christiania 1795, p. 49. The concern about the drifts of universities' administrative and

Europe's 18th century philosophers and the growing public opinion that often saw the administrative or financial autonomy of universities as one of the main reasons for their legitimacy crisis.[36] In other words, he supported an increased implication of the Danish State in the academic life of the universities, both in Denmark and potentially in Norway. Until 1811, few months only before the foundation of the University, the winner of the second contest, the priest Nicolai Wergeland (1780-1848), still expressed the wish of a restoring the national dignity of Norway under the authority of the Danish king, depicted as the father of both brother kingdoms.[37] In other words, the most radical aspect of the turmoil was not in the ideological contents of this nationalism, but in defining and practicing new modalities of political participation through the growing public sphere against Absolutist authorities.

[Power point slide 14]: presentation du plan

Education and national identity: the Norwegian Enlightenment project (1771-1811)

We have seen how Norwegian academic project was the manifestation of an identity-based movement intending to redefine the relationship between Denmark and Norway, with a various forms of political mobilization. As stated in the introduction, the other significant lens through which one can consider the Norwegian academic project was of course the problem of education. In spite of its strong local and national undertones, the Norwegian academic project was also part of a large European debate about the necessity of reforming education in general, and universities in particular.[38] I would also like to give a short outline about the link

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financial autonomy was also motivated by the will of avoiding corruption and corporatism among professors. Ibid. p. 229.

[36] R. D. Anderson, *European universities from the Enlightenment to 1914*, op. cit. p. 8. For example, in Sweden, universities were attacked from two standpoints in the second half of the 18th century. On one hand, the centralizing efforts of the Gustavian monarchy tended to diminish the jurisdictional autonomy of the institution, especially when the kings directly influenced the appointment of chancellors or new professorships. In spite of this growing centralization, the University of Uppsala had benefited from a substantial material endowment from the Crown in the 1620s, which secured its financial autonomy from the Crown until the mid-19th century. On the other hand, the rising public opinion criticized at the same time the social and cultural isolation of a supposedly corporatist institution. Moreover, the economical independence of the university provided also a more or less legitimate ground to these critics, being seen as the one of the reasons for universities' intellectual and social impassiveness. In T. T. Segerstedt, *Den akademiska friheten under Gustaviansk tid*, Uppsala 1974, p. 240-242.

[37] See *Mnemosyne: et Forsøg paa at besvare den af det Kongl. Selskab for Norges vel fremsatte Opgave om et Universitet i Norge*, op. cit. pp. 59-62.

[38] In 1788, this international debate contributed to foster the implementation of a new foundational decree for the University of Copenhagen. But in spite of some pedagogical improvements mainly inspired by the German examples of Gottingen and Halle, this reform was intellectually far less ambitious than Gunnerus' plan concerning the normalization of secular sciences like history, natural sciences and cameralism. In L. Grane, K. Hørby (red.), *Københavns universitet: almindelig historie 1788-1936*, op. cit. p. 11.

between scientific progress and national enlightenment: this link was indeed constantly asserted in the second half of the 18th century, and contribute to draw a model that one could reasonably call a 'Norwegian idea of a University.'

In the first contribution of 1795, written by Christen Pram, the author did not speak of a university, but chose the name 'high school' or institute to describe the Norwegian academic project. He moreover declared his scepticism to the division of the University into 4 Faculties, meaning that according to his experience, this division failed to achieve the purposes it originally intended to reach, and notably by creating unnecessary frontiers between academic disciplines. This was perceived as a major cause for intellectual backwardness.[39] But the criticism of this division became also for Pram the occasion of questioning the traditional pre-eminence of the Faculty of Theology and the unjustified contempt in which the Faculty of Philosophy, or so called- Lower faculty, was still held in, although it basically included most of the sciences: natural science, philosophy, history... For Pram, the refusal of the division of a Norwegian academy into 4 faculties was firstly the expression of an unfair system which failed to promote Science as it should, both intellectually and socially.[40] From this perspective, his criticism reminds plainly of the one made by Immanuel Kant three years later in the pamphlet *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, although it is maybe not as insightful and systematic as Kant's argumentation.[41] Nicolai Wergeland's *Mnemosyne*, who won the second contest in 1810 and became the most praised and consensual contribution to the debate, even

[39] About the faculties, Pram wrote: "Is it so with the daughters of wisdom? Should the Muses have secrets for each other separate interests? ..." Indeed, this specific critic intervened in a context when Science (*Videnskab / Wissenschaft*) was more and more often referred to as an idealist, neo-classicist and unifying frame for different forms of knowledge. In C. Pram, *Forsög om en Höjskoles Anlæg i Norge efter den af et Selskab i Christiania fremsatte Priisopgave. Et Priisskrift*, Christiania 1795 pp. 50-53.

[40] Ibid. pp. 57-63.

[41] Kant's essay was published in a context of tightened censorship in Prussia under the reign of Frederick William II (1786-1797), who intended to put an end to the previous period of enlightened despotism. As the philosopher wrote: "*It is clear that this division is made and this nomenclature adopted with reference to the government rather than the learned professions; for a faculty is considered higher only if its teachings (both as to their content and the way they are expounded to the public) interest the government itself, while the faculty whose function is only to look after the interests of science is called lower because it may use its own judgement about what it teaches*." In I. Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties (Der Streit der Fakultäten)*, Lincoln 1992, pp. 25-27. In a context of mistrust towards many German universities, the essay of Kant was also a plea intending to defend the free play of reason for academic philosophers even if they ought to damage the so-called dignity of higher faculties' statutes, which mainly drew their legitimacy from authoritative texts. The traditional academic learning was mainly based on what Kant called: the Bible, 'the law of the land' and medical regulations. To these, he respectively opposed the idea of Reason, natural law and methods of therapy. Ibid. p. 35. Kant called for the autonomy of the free judgement of reason, constituted as a self-legislating power in the service of science: from this standpoint, the Faculty of philosophy was to his view the most legitimate one, because it gave the priority to truth instead of obedience. In T. Bahti, "Histories of the University: Kant and Humboldt", in *MLN: Modern Language Notes*, vol. 102, n° 3, April 1987, German issue, John Hopkins University Press, p. 443.

proposed the foundation of 6 equal faculties.[42] After the formal foundation of the university in 1811, the commission in charge of designing the new institution was naturally influenced by the long-lasting debate, and the plan of 1812 proposed to create a university with 8 faculties: the Norwegian university promised to be the radically modern academic institution that many European intellectuals of the time were dreaming of, while it had shown extremely difficult to reform the University of Copenhagen for promoting modern knowledge. The Faculty of philosophy in Christiania was indeed meant to be replaced by 5 new faculties: philosophy, natural sciences, mathematics, history/philology and economy.[43]

Without going to deep into the various nuances of the Norwegian academic project as it came out of this debate, one can name two main recurrent concerns that characterized Enlightenment educational ideals.

- The importance given to cameralism, economy, practical knowledge and natural science (and particularly mineralogy) as tools for developing the nation. Most of the participants to the debate meant that Norway with its mountains and its mines, was especially well-situated to pursue some of the sciences (especially mineralogy and geology) which a modernised university ought to promote. There was also a great need for research and education in these sciences: in other words, the specific identity of the Norwegian nature should both be the ground for promoting the national welfare and knowledge in Europe.[44]
- The importance given to Science *(Wissenschaft/Videnskab*) as a unifying, civilizing frame both for the individual and for the public good: one of the major functions of the new university was seen as centre for spreading not only knowledge, but also morality and national dignity.

[Power point Slide 15] Conclusion

In spite of the originality of this model, the foundation of the Norwegian university mainly happened in a difficult material context (political and economical isolation during the

[42] *Mnemosyne: et Forsøg paa at besvare den af det Kongl. Selskab for Norges vel fremsatte Opgave om et Universitet i Norge. Del 3 og 4*, Christiania 1811, p. 111.
[43] E. Bjerke, *Uavhengighet gjennom vitenskap. Naturhistorien som økonomisk og politisk redskap i opplysningstidens Danmark og Norge* op. cit. p. 93.
[44] "*Europe is now awaiting for [mineralogy] and the physical geography of Norway; it awaits for contributions about nature to Knowledge, and it has great expectations from this mountain people*." [Tyge Rothe.] In A. F. Andresen, "Den norske universitetsmodellen i oppstartingsfasen 1811-1830", *Universitet, samfunn og politick: 18 innlegg om universitets- og vitenskapshistorie* op. cit. p. 110.

Napoleonic Wars, smallness of the academic milieu and resources) which compelled the new institution to be pragmatic. When it opened its doors in 1813, the Norwegian university actually was designed as a traditional university with four faculties. Besides, the new institution had to cope quite rapidly with a new political and international context. As Norway became independent in 1814, the University of Christiania was not meant to become a Norwegian university within the kingdom of Denmark, which had other academic institutions in Copenhagen, Sorø and Kiel: it became the only academic institution of the country, and had to fulfil the most urgent tasks.[45] Finally, most of the professors and students had been educated in the University of Copenhagen, and the educational practices and laws in Norway were then partly similar to the Danish system.

[45] A. F. Andresen, *Nytte, dannelse, vitenskap? Universitetet og økonomifaget i det nye Norge 1811-1840*, oslo 2005, p. 9.